



November 20, 2003

Mrs. Ellen Russell
Office of Fossil Energy (FE-27)
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20585-0350

RE: Response to the DOE/BLM's Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and to Conduct Public Scoping Meetings and Notice of Floodplain and Wetlands Involvement; for Baja California Power, Inc. (BCP) and Sempra Energy Resources (SER).

Dear Mrs. Russell:

The Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (ICAPCD) has received a copy of the Federal Register (Vol.68, No.210, dated Thursday, October 30, 2003) Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) pertaining to the two Presidential Permits that were issued to the above named source's for their transmission line projects. As stated in the notice, it is the ICAPCD's concern and understanding that the corresponding EIS will address BCP and SER projects which consists of the construction and operation of the natural gas power plants located in Mexicali, Mexico, and their associated two separate 230-kV transmission lines that cross the international border into the U.S. via Imperial County.

Since 2000, the ICAPCD along with EPA, CARB, and concerned Imperial County cities and community representative groups have been assessing, reviewing, and commenting on the proposed presidential permits and the potential adverse impacts the two projects will have on the residents of Imperial County and Mexicali. We hope that this new EIS will effectively and thoroughly address all of our concerns as previously submitted and recapped below.

The ICAPCD still feels strongly that the operation of the two power plants and their associated transmission lines will have an adverse impact on the air quality for the Imperial/Mexicali Valley region. The following are some of our continued concerns that we believe should thoroughly be addressed in the EIS:

- 1) Imperial County is a non-attainment area for PM10, Ozone, and CO for the city of Calexico, located on the border with Mexicali. Imperial County is also slated to be designated as non-attainment for PM2.5. These two projects emit enormous amounts of PM10, NOx (which is a precursor to Ozone), CO, and Ammonia (which is a precursor to PM2.5). Monitoring data has shown that concentrations of PM10 and Ozone have exceeded the Mexican Standards many times in Mexicali and surrounding area. There are no limits for CO or PM2.5 in Mexico. Due to the proximity of these projects to the international border and the populated cities in Imperial County and Mexicali, the ICAPCD feels that the additional emissions associated with the two projects will adversely impact the region's air quality, exacerbate exceedances of emission standards in both the U.S. and Mexico, and will impact the health of the population in the region.
- 2) In order to make a realistic air quality impact analysis on the level of significance of all emissions, the EIS should contain a full impact analysis of the construction and operation of the two project facilities and associated transmission lines, and also analyze the cumulative impacts of these two projects. The ICAPCD requests that this analysis encompass the impact to the air quality in Imperial County, as well as the community of Mexicali and its surrounding area. The analysis should also identify the specific control measures that will be applied to control all emissions and the methods of securing appropriate offsets.
- 3) BCP has announced its intention to install SCR on the remaining two power units that do not currently have SCR. These controls are scheduled to be installed by the first quarter of 2006. The ICAPCD requests the EIS make a full impact analysis from all power units for the first phase of operation until such time as the proposed additional controls are installed during the first quarter of 2006.

- 4) ICAPCD also requests that the EIS include a comprehensive health risk assessment that thoroughly identifies all emission pollutants and the "cumulative" health risks they impose on residents on both sides of the border. ICAPCD requests that this comprehensive health risk assessment include the following: 1) the impacts of the two projects for the operating time period prior to installment of controls in the first quarter of 2006, and 2) the impacts of the two projects when all units are equipped with SCR.
- 5) ICAPCD feels that Best Available Control Technology (BACT) for all pollutants must be installed on all power generating units located at the two project facilities (i.e. two units at Sempra Energy, and the four units at La Rosita Power Complex) immediately, and that offsets of all emission increases associated with the operation of these two projects be secured as per the CAA and the CCAA.

In Conclusion, the ICAPCD is eager to review the draft EIS that includes the comprehensive health risk assessments. The ICAPCD continues to insist that full mitigation of the impacts of these projects be fully mitigated to protect air quality and the health of residents of the Imperial/Mexicali Valley's.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (760) 482-4606.

Sincerely,



Stephen L. Birdsall
Air Pollution Control Officer

cc: Congressman Bob Filner
Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Barbara Boxer
Imperial County Board of Supervisors
Robertta Burns, CEO, Imperial County
Ralph Cordova, County Counsel
Jurg Heuberger, Planning Director
Jesse Silva, IID General Manager
Greg Thomsen, BLM El Centro District Manager